

To Whom It May Concern:

October 30, 2009

I am writing to express how much I love the Upstart Program. I love it as a parent and an educator. The format is amazing and motivating for my children. The way it keeps them interacting, not just watching a computer screen, by requiring them to click on the green arrow typically makes the 15 minutes go by very quickly. The repetitive nature encourages learning in a fun way. When my son, Ethan, began the program about 6 months ago he could identify about 16 uppercase letters, and only the lowercase letters that looked like their uppercase partner. I worked with him on pre-school academics for 2 hours a day, 3 days a week for 4 months. I could never really monitor his progress and I don't think I could really tell what he was learning. Then we heard about Upstart on the news and I was really excited to get it in my home for Ethan. After having it a few weeks, I could tell it was an amazing program. Even my 3 year old daughter, EmiLee insisted on having her own account on Upstart. When Ethan and EmiLee began pre-school in September, they were both the only kids in their class who knew how to spell their name.

I tutor kids with autism in a one-on-one setting for a living. At the time we first got going with Upstart, I was working individually with a child who was 5 and getting ready for kindergarten. I was using the typical methods proven effective for children with autism but this child, Henry, was really struggling with several academic concepts. He was not motivated to learn the basic things he needed to know to be successful in a typical kindergarten classroom. If I couldn't get him ready, he was going to be placed in a classroom with other children with disabilities instead of a regular education classroom. This would have hindered his success socially. I started him with Upstart about 4 months before he was supposed to start kindergarten. The skills I had been trying to teach him for 6 months he picked up in 3 weeks using the Upstart Program. It is my professional opinion that he picked these things up so quickly because of the way they are presented on the Upstart Program. I have used several other academic CD-Rom programs with Henry but he wasn't motivated like he was when using Upstart. Specifically, the activity where the child watches the lips move to form the sound of the letters is perfect for children with autism. It is to the point and very clear. This activity not only prepared Henry to read, but it showed him how to form the letter sound and in turn, he began identifying the letters more consistently. He began kindergarten in a regular education classroom with peers from his neighborhood.

Ethan, Henry and EmiLee, love to receive the award in the mail at the end of the month. It is also reinforcing for me as a mom and teacher to be updated by the weekly emails on the usage minutes. If we have a week where we didn't quite make 15 minutes a day for 5 days (because "life" happens) I know quickly and can make sure the next week we do a little more. I think Waterford Research has an amazing product and I hope it is available for my third child, who is currently 2 years old.

I strongly support funding for the Upstart Program by Waterford Research not only as a parent but as an educator as well.

Sincerely,
Robyn Anderson
(801)560-5742

August 15, 2009

Dear Claudia:

Thank you . . . the nearly 2 year old is using the Central park program. He loves it! It is the first thing he wants to do in the morning, and works on it about 20 minutes before his interest span dwindles.

After seeing the results of the five year old's beginning assessment test and the one she took yesterday I feel very fortunate that she was able to use Rusty and Rosie this summer. Our legislators need to know how valuable this program is in preparing our little ones for school. It would make it so much easier on teachers if every student could enter kindergarten with the skills taught by Rusty and Rosie. I am particularly impressed with the fact that if Abigail was distracted and not paying attention ... then she guessed at an answer ... the program went through review after review after review! She has certainly learned it is best to do it right the first time!

The Waterford staff has been very helpful every time I have called for help. From the initial set up problems, the town meeting, to a phone call his past week to verify my 2 year old initial questionnaire had been received, everyone has been very patient, concerned, and helpful! Hats off to everyone!

Thank you, Claudia, for your help in getting the 2-year old in the pilot program for Central Park. As I indicated earlier, it is the first thing the 2-year old wants to do each day. (And I already have him on the waiting list for Rusty and Rosie for when he is age 4-5 if the State is able to continue the program in the future.)

Marilyn

From: Jeannie Adair

Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2009 11:38 AM

To: Alberto Santoyo; Isaac Troyo; Jorge Leano; Karlof Lopez; Kimberly Hill; Ryan Terres; Tyler Anderson; Ann Izzo; Elizabeth Estrada; Jeannette Martinez; Claudia Miner; Stefanie Rehn

Subject: Really neat story about an UPSTART family

Hi all,

Peggy DeLong called this morning and told me about her very wonderful, life-changing, experience with UPSTART. My case notes are shown below. I just thought I'd pass this on.

Peggy called and said she is going to be returning her computer soon because her child, Bella, has started kindergarten. She is sad about having to return the computer and told me the following story, paraphrased, about her younger son, Dallas.

Dallas drown and was revived when he was about 20-22 months old. he is now 3 years + 1 month old. He is currently in an early prevention special needs class. He previously used what was called a "twin language," which from what I understand means he was using other sounds, esp. vowel sounds, to communicate. He watches his sister use RRLWM and has also been using Free Play. He talks now! Before they started using the program, he knew about 15 words; he now knows about 50. He is doing things they didn't know if he would ever be able to do. He is labeling things, beginning to use numbers, using words in context and is able to use the computer on his own (signing on to RRLWM and playing). She gave me an example: he used to have one word, "moona," for the moon, sun and earth. Because of one of the songs in RRLWM that identifies all three, he now is using the correct word for each.

She thinks it has helped Bella a lot too and prepared her for school, but she is most impressed with how it helped Dallas, in part because she had no idea that it even could help him.

She did give her permission to release these comments, though you might want to listen to the phone recording and even talk to her more. She is happy to do this. It's important to her and she would like there to be more focus made on how it can affect special needs children.

From: Isaac Troyo
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2009 11:29 AM
To: Claudia Miner; Stefanie Rehn; Ann Izzo; Kimberly Hill
Subject: Email from participant.

Good morning,

We recieved a "Thank You" email from one of our Spanish speaking participants. I took the liberty of translating it for your reading pleasure.

October 29th, 2009.

Upstart Program:

I would like to thank you for giving my daughter Mariana and I the opportunity to participate in the Upstart program. She used it for about three or four months, and learned numbers and letters with ease with the fun songs and activities. She's also learned to read a few words.

At her Kindergarten interview, her teacher told me that Mariana knew lots of letters, numbers, and words and that she felt that Mariana would be one of the first students able to read. This made me feel very proud and happy for her. Especially because she's had some developmental delays with learning and speech since birth. I think this is a good example that the Upstart program is effective and helps children learn with ease.

It also allowed me to make using the computer a daily routine. As if she were attending school daily without absences. I hope to have the same gains and experiences for my younger daughter Dulce, who is also enrolled in the program.

I would like to thank User Support who were always able to assist me in Spanish. They were friendly and resolved each issue. It felt easy.

Sincerely,

Veronica Velasquez

Octubre 29 2009

Upstart Program:

Quiero agradecerles por darme y darle la oportunidad a mi hija Mariana, de participar en el programa de Upstart, ella lo uso por 3 o 4 meses y aprendió números, letras y le fue fácil con las canciones y actividades tan divertidas, también comenzó a leer algunas palabras, cuando fue Mariana a la entrevista con su maestra de Kinder ella me compartió que ella sabía muchas letras, números y palabras, y que también parecía que iba a ser una de las primeras que comenzaría a leer, así que esto me hizo sentir orgullosa y feliz por ella, por que ella tiene un síndrome desde su nacimiento así tiene problemas de aprendizaje y del habla, pienso que esto es un buen ejemplo que el programa de Upstart es efectivo y ayuda a los niños a aprender fácilmente, también fue necesario que yo hiciera ir a la computadora una rutina como si tuviera que ir a la escuela diariamente sin faltar, también espero conseguir las mismas cosas para mi otra hija Dulce que también está en el programa, también doy las gracias al soporte técnico que siempre me atendió en español, fueron amables y resolvieron todos mis problemas y fue fácil.

Atte.: Verónica Velazquez.